

## Panel Discussions Draw Crowds at Dubai Diamond Conference 2015

**DUBAI, April 22, 2015:** Expert panels discussed the most important issues facing the global diamond industry on the concluding day of the two-day Dubai Diamond Conference 2015 including synthetic diamonds, ethics and diamond financing.

Peter Meeus, chairman of the Dubai Diamond Centre, said: "Each panel throughout both days was attended by an audience of more than 150 people and the feedback we received was extremely positive. We aimed to encourage discussion among the leaders of the diamond industry to meet the challenges of the future and we are happy to have succeeded in that."

The second day of the Conference began with a panel discussion on the subject of Ethics, NGOs and Business. Panel members were Christine Gordon, former UN Consultant; Ola Bello, Head of GARP of the South African Institute of International Affairs; Shamiso Mtisi, Member of the KP Civil Society Coalition and Head of Programmes at ZELA; Edward Asscher, President of the World Diamond Council; and Alex Yearsley, Director of Martello Risk and former Global Witness campaigner.

The second panel of the morning was entitled Synthetic Diamonds: Problem or Not at All? The high-level participants include Edward Asscher, WDC President; Ernest Blom, President of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses; Marc Brauner, Co-CEO of IGI Worldwide; Sabyasachi Ray, Executive Director of the GJEPC; Audrey Tcherkoff, General Manager Middle East at Robert Wan; and Russell Mehta, Managing Director of Rosy Blue India.

Panel members agreed that it was likely there would be an increase in synthetic diamond production in the coming years that could make up for some of the predicted shortfall in diamond supply expected in the coming decade.

The first day ended with a panel discussing the challenges facing diamond jewelry retailers and the steps they can take to improve sales.

The Retail in Challenging Markets panel determined that all jewelers need a physical and an online operation to do business in today's market. The panel members were: Amit Dhamani, CEO/Managing Director, of Dhamani Jewels Group; Roberto Coin, President of Roberto Coin; Vishal Mehta, CEO of Dimexon; Karim Merchant, Group CEO and MD of Pure Gold Jewelers; and Vishal Mehta, CEO of Dimexon.

**-ENDS-**

### NOTE TO EDITORS:

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The **Dubai Diamond Exchange** (DDE) is a DMCC platform and a leading diamond centre based in the Almas Tower. From buyers to sellers to service providers - everything the industry require in terms of infrastructure and a marketplace is available under one roof in a secure environment at Almas Tower including: DDE, vaulting, boiling, polishing, certification, transport and logistics services and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Dubai's strong leadership and vision has enabled the Emirate to quickly transform itself into a key link in the global transport and distribution system. Since its inception in 2002, DMCC has successfully established Dubai as the global gateway for commodities trade by building and enhancing its physical and financial infrastructure, regulatory standards, products and services, including the launch of the DDE and the Dubai Gold and Commodities Exchange (DGCX). This has positioned Dubai as one of the world's leading diamond centres.